

Vox

x

Everyone deserves an explanation

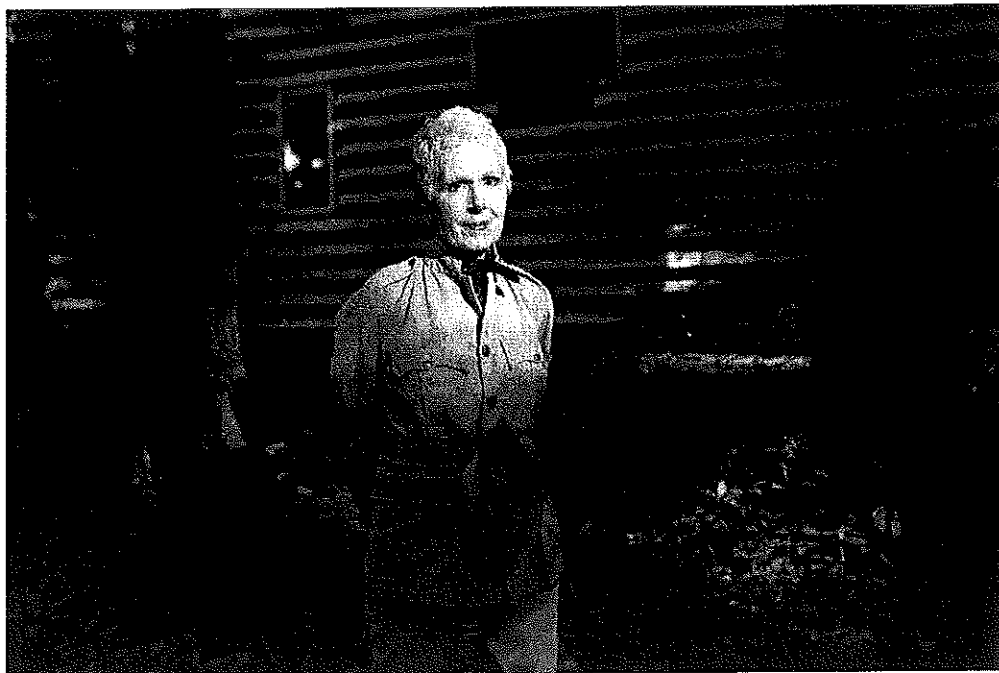
Vox's mission is to help everyone understand our weird, wonderful, complicated world, so that we can all help shape it. We're aiming to add 1,500 financial contributors this month to help keep Vox free for all. Will you become one of them?

Yes, I'll Give

In 2004, E. Jean Carroll promised to help you land a man. Now she's asking if you need one.

E. Jean Carroll's oeuvre shows us how dramatically the way we talk about women's pain has changed.

By Constance Grady | @constancegrady | Jul 10, 2019, 2:00pm EDT



years — and how much pain and anger was always lurking just below the surface of the giddy, gotta-catch-a-man discourse of the 2000s.

RELATED

E. Jean Carroll: "The world is a very, very merry place without men"

***What Do We Need Men For?* finds no convincing answer to its question**

Most of the press coverage of *What Do We Need Men For?* has been devoted to Carroll's Hideous Men List, **on which the last man named is President Donald Trump**. Carroll accuses Trump of having attacked her in the mid-1990s in a dressing room at New York's Bergdorf Goodman department store; the passage describing the alleged attack went viral when a version of it **was excerpted in New York magazine earlier this month**. Although **Carroll doesn't use the word herself**, the attack she describes meets the legal definition of rape. (Trump **denied the allegation** in a press release, saying **"she's not my type."**)

But Trump is just one of many men on the Hideous Men List. ("I assure you that I have been attacked by far, far better men than the president," Carroll says.) He's No. 20, and there are 19 more, ranging from children who Carroll says sexually assaulted her when she was very young to the ex-husband who she says choked her to a man who yells obscenities at her from his car to Carroll herself. (She puts herself on the list for flashing a male college professor during a lecture.)

All of this listing and cataloging of offenses sounds grim, but *What Do We Need Men For?* is in actuality a bit of a romp. It's a whimsical book, a book that approaches its high-concept road trip with tongue firmly in cheek. Carroll peppers her sentences liberally with bubbly asides to her readers, whom she always addresses as *Ladies*: "I can tell you, Ladies, without reserve, that in normal circumstances, I would be *riveted* to the ponytail, as I am a great ponytail aficionado and can rank the greatest ponytails I've seen in my life," she confides, upon spotting a particularly exemplary high ponytail in Anita, Indiana.

Rating

V V V V V

She shows us photographs of her car, Miss Bingley (named for the mean girl in *Pride and Prejudice*), which she has hand painted with polka dots and frogs. When a girl in Elnora,